(e) the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) Alligators are not found in India. The Ministry has constituted a Crisis Management Group to look into the mortality of *Gharials* in the Chambal River Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

(b) to (d) The site of the mortality in Chambal river Sanctuary has been visited by veterinarians, wildlife experts of national and international repute. However, no conclusive reason for the mortality has been ascertained. The Crisis Management Group has been providing their inputs to the Union Government from time to time. However, their is no particular time frame for the Crisis Management Group to submit reports.

(e) The important steps taken by the Government to check the *Gharial* mortality are as follows:

(i) The Ministry of Environment & Forests has constituted a Crisis Management Group with the representatives of State Governments, scientific research institutions, NGOs active in the field of conservation. International experts have also been invited who had visited the site of mortality.

(ii) Regular monitoring of Sanctuary is carried out.

(iii) Patrolling in the area has been increased by the concerned forest departments to check illegal fishing and sand mining.

(iv) Immediate financial assistance to the tune of Rs. 12.08 lakhs has been provided to the State of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh for mitigation of *Gharial* mortality apart from grant of Rs. 27.295 lakhs for the National Chambal Gharial Sanctuary, for the year 2007-08.

Conservation of Environment

†1436. SHRI BHAGWATI SINGH:
SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of trees are being illegally cut in forests in the name of development posing serious threat to environment;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that the number of wild animals like tiger, leopard etc. has also decreased considerably due to the shrinking of forests day-by day;

(c) if so, whether Government is going to take any steps for conservation of forests and protection of wild animals; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) No such report regarding large number of trees being cut illegally for development purpose has come to the notice.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) Factors like fragmentation and degradation of habitat, decrease in forest cover, poaching etc. do adversely affect the population of wild animals like tiger, elephant, leopard etc.

(c) and (d) The protection and management of forests and wildlife is primarily the responsibility of the State/UT Governments. The steps taken by the Government are as follows:

- Legal protection measures like Indian Forest Act, 1927, Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and the rules, guidelines thereof various State Acts and Rules thereof.
- Management measures, like working of forests according to approved Working Plans.
- Financial measures, like providing assistance to the States/Union Territories under Centrally Sponsored Schemes *i.e.* Integrated Forest Protection Scheme, Development of National Parks & Sanctuaries, Project Tiger, Project Elephant, etc.
- Constant Patrolling of the area including flying squads, mobile protection units etc.
- Creation of check posts and barriers.
- Mechanism of transit permit for movement of forest produce.
- Survey and Demarcation of forest areas.
- Involvement of local communities through Joint Forest Management Committees/ Eco-development Committees.
- The Central Bureau of Investigation has been empowered under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to apprehend and prosecute wildlife offenders.
- The wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been set up for control of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and its products.

Rare species of animals

1437. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the present strength of rare species of animals like lions, tigers and leopards etc., giving details, Sanctuary-wise;

(b) the species of animals that have faced extinction over the last one decade;

(c) whether Government has focused its attention to save the species on the verge of extinction; and

(d) if so, with what results?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) Sanctuary-wise population details of wild animals are not collated at Central Government level. The All India Estimation of Tiger, co-predators and its prey was carried out recently in the tiger range states of the country using a modified